

UNNUMBERED LETTERS ISSUED FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2009

Dated	Subject	Distribution
02/04/09	Acting State Director for Vermont	N.O.O., S/D & A/SD
02/04/09	Acting State Director for Missouri	N.O.O., S/D & A/SD
02/04/09	Acting State Director for Puerto Rico	N.O.O., S/D & A/SD
02/04/09	Acting State Director of Kansas	N.O.O., S/D & A/SD
02/04/09	Acting State Director for Michigan	N.O.O., S/D & A/SD
02/09/09	Intermediary Relending Program Unemployment Rate	S/D
02/11/09	The Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, EnergySmart Schools Program Releases <i>Guide to Financing EnergySmart Schools</i>	S/D
02/11/09	Employee Data Calls	S/D
02/13/09	Interest Rate Changes for Housing Programs and Credit Sales (Nonprogram)	S/D
02/13/09	Fiscal Year 2009 Site Manager of the Year Recognition Program	S/S
02/17/09	Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program Disaster Assistance Funding Procedures	S/D
02/18/09	Going Green by Reducing Unwanted Mail	N.O.E
02/18/09	Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Teleconferences	N.O.O. & S/D

February 4, 2009

TO: National Office Officials
Rural Development State Directors
Rural Development Acting State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors
Human Resources Managers

FROM: Sherie Hinton Henry /s/ *Sherie Hinton Henry*
Acting Deputy Under Secretary
Rural Development

SUBJECT: Acting State Director for Vermont

Rhonda Shippee has been selected to serve as Acting State Director for Vermont. Ms. Shippee's appointment was effective **February 4, 2009**, until further notice.

Ms. Shippee is currently the Supervisory Loan Specialist for the Vermont State Office.

I know I can count on your support and assistance while she is serving as Acting State Director and responsible for carrying out the mission of Rural Development in Vermont. Ms. Shippee can be reached on (802) 828-6030 or via e-mail at rhonda.Shippee@vt.usda.gov.

EXPIRATION DATE:
February 28, 2010

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on February 10, 2009, at 10:00am by Human Resources.
State Directors and National Office Officials should advise other personnel as appropriate.

February 4, 2009

TO: National Office Officials
Rural Development State Directors
Rural Development Acting State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors
Human Resources Managers

FROM: Sherie Hinton Henry /s/ ***Sherie Hinton Henry***
Acting Deputy Under Secretary
Rural Development

SUBJECT: Acting State Director for Missouri

Raymond Homer, Jr. has been selected to serve as Acting State Director for Missouri.
Mr. Homer's appointment was effective **February 4, 2009**, until further notice.

Mr. Homer is currently the Assistant to the State Director for the Missouri State Office.

I know I can count on your support and assistance while he is serving as Acting State Director and responsible for carrying out the mission of Rural Development in Missouri. Mr. Homer can be reached on (573) 876-9328 or via e-mail at raymond.homer@mo.usda.gov.

EXPIRATION DATE:
February 28, 2010

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on February 10, 2009, at 10:00am by Human Resources.
State Directors and National Office Officials should advise other personnel as appropriate.

February 4, 2009

TO: National Office Officials
Rural Development State Directors
Rural Development Acting State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors
Human Resources Managers

FROM: Sherie Hinton Henry /s/ *Sherie Hinton Henry*
Acting Deputy Under Secretary
Rural Development

SUBJECT: Acting State Director for Puerto Rico

Pedro Gomez has been selected to serve as Acting State Director for Puerto Rico. Mr. Gomez's appointment was effective **February 4, 2009**, until further notice.

Mr. Gomez is currently the Administrative Program Director for the Puerto Rico State Office.

I know I can count on your support and assistance while he is serving as Acting State Director and responsible for carrying out the mission of Rural Development in Puerto Rico.

Mr. Gomez can be reached on (787) 766-5095 or via e-mail at pedro.gomez@pr.usda.gov.

EXPIRATION DATE:
February 28, 2010

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on February 10, 2009, at 9:45am by Human Resources.
State Directors and National Office Officials should advise other personnel as appropriate.

February 4, 2009

TO: National Office Officials
Rural Development State Directors
Rural Development Acting State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors
Human Resources Managers

FROM: Sherie Hinton Henry /s/ *Sherie Hinton Henry*
Acting Deputy Under Secretary
Rural Development

SUBJECT: Acting State Director for Kansas

Darla Buckman has been selected to serve as Acting State Director for Kansas. Ms. Buckman's appointment was effective **February 4, 2009**, until further notice.

Ms. Buckman is currently the Assistant to the State Director for the Kansas State Office.

I know I can count on your support and assistance while she is serving as Acting State Director and responsible for carrying out the mission of Rural Development in Kansas. Ms. Buckman can be reached on (785) 271-2712 or via e-mail at darla.buckman@ks.usda.gov.

EXPIRATION DATE:
February 28, 2010

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on February 10, 2009, at 10:00am by Human Resources.
State Directors and National Office Officials should advise other personnel as appropriate.

February 4, 2009

TO: National Office Officials
Rural Development State Directors
Rural Development Acting State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors
Human Resources Managers

FROM: Sherie Hinton Henry /s/ *Sherie Hinton Henry*
Acting Deputy Under Secretary
Rural Development

SUBJECT: Acting State Director for Michigan

Frank Tuma has been selected to serve as Acting State Director for Michigan. Mr. Tuma's appointment was effective **February 4, 2009**, until further notice.

Mr. Tuma is currently the Community Programs Director for the Michigan State Office.

I know I can count on your support and assistance while he is serving as Acting State Director and responsible for carrying out the mission of Rural Development in Michigan. Mr. Tuma can be reached on (517) 324-5208 or via e-mail at frank.tuma@mi.usda.gov.

EXPIRATION DATE:
February 28, 2010

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on February 10, 2009, at 10:00am by Human Resources.
State Directors and National Office Officials should advise other personnel as appropriate.

February 9, 2009

TO: State Directors, Rural Development
ATTN: Business Programs Directors
SUBJECT: Intermediary Relending Program
Unemployment Rate

RD Instruction 4274-D, section 4274.344(c)(2)(iii), provides for priority points for Intermediary Relending Program applications based on unemployment rates. The overall national unemployment rate for December 2008 was 7.2 percent. This unemployment rate will be used to compute the unemployment rate points until updated by the National Office. This supersedes the figure announced in an unnumbered letter issued on January 12, 2008.

(Signed by Pat Fiala)

PAT FIALA
Acting Administrator
Business and Cooperative Programs

EXPIRATION DATE:
February 28, 2010

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Community/Business Programs

February 11, 2009

TO: State Directors
Rural Development

ATTN: Community Program Directors, Public Information Coordinators, State
Architects, and Area Office Directors

FROM: James C. Alsop (*Signed by James C. Alsop*)
Acting Administrator
Rural Housing and Community Facilities Programs

SUBJECT: The Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and
Renewable Energy, EnergySmart Schools Program Releases *Guide to
Financing EnergySmart Schools*

The Department of Energy (DOE) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have collaborated to develop a Rural Development initiative for increasing the construction and/or rehabilitation of K–12 public schools in rural communities. As part of this effort, Rural Development is pleased to announce the release of DOE’s *Guide to Financing EnergySmart Schools* (“Guide”).

The Guide is a detailed supplemental tool for all schools, including those interested in participating in the pilot rural collaboration program and receiving loans, loan guarantees, or grants through the Community Facilities Program. The Guide addresses real and perceived financial barriers associated with construction of new high-performance energy efficient schools (defined as a school facility that improves the student learning environment and achieves the maximum level of energy performance possible), energy efficient renovations, and retrofits of existing facilities.

Written for school administrators, business officials and board members, the Guide’s topics are divided by chapter and include:

1. Principles of Financing High-Performance Schools (such as determining project objectives, performing life cycle cost analysis, and selecting a cost-benefit analysis method)
2. Making a Business Case for High-Performance Schools (to key stakeholders)

EXPIRATION DATE:
December 31, 2009

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Community Programs

3. Internal Financing as a financing option
4. Debt Financing as a financing option
5. Leasing Arrangements as a financing option
6. Energy Savings Performance Contracts as a financing option

Appendices provide a tutorial on the basic financial concepts discussed in the Guide. They also provide an extensive listing of state, regional, and non-profit resources available to school districts interested in high-performance school buildings.

The *Guide to Financing EnergySmart Schools* is available as a free download at the EnergySmart Schools website: <http://www.energysmartschools.gov>. A limited number of printed copies are available for distribution through State and Area Offices to potential applicants. To request copies, please contact Margo Appel, EnergySmart Schools Program Manager, at 202-586-9495.

State and Area Office Directors are encouraged to share this important tool with rural K–12 districts interested in making the commitment to high-performance schools. In addition, State and Area Office Directors should continue to identify and notify DOE of candidates within rural communities that qualify to participate in the Community Facilities Program (page 13 of the Guide) and that express interest in incorporating aspects of high-performance design into their schools.

The collaborative effort between DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and USDA's Community Programs Division was established in November 2007. It is designed to encourage high-performance design and construction in rural communities, thereby substantially increasing the number of rural facilities that achieve a high level of cost-effective energy performance. The success of this collaboration is dependent upon continuous coordination between USDA, DOE, and school stakeholders at the local, state, regional, and national levels. Additional announcements regarding specific activities related to this partnership and available DOE tools will be distributed to USDA State Directors as the collaboration progresses. If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact Larry Fleming on USDA RD Program Support Staff at 202-720-8547, or Derek Jones on USDA RD Community Programs at 202-720-1504.

February 11, 2009

SUBJECT: Employment Data Calls

TO: Rural Development State Directors
Rural Development Acting State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors
Human Resources Managers

FROM: Clyde Thompson /s/*Clyde Thompson*
Deputy Administrator
Operations and Management

This is a follow up to the letter dated January 28, 2009, "Employment Data Call." The previous request for approval to make a job offer will continue to be submitted via Attachment 1, and one additional report in Attachment 2.

Some changes have been made to Attachment 1, Hiring Control; as a result of questions we received from Human Resources offices. Attached is a revised version. You will note that only recruitment actions where a selection has been made, but the job offer has not been offered, should be placed on this spreadsheet. Do not make any tentative offers until you receive approval to do so. Submissions are due to Norma Valdes, Chief, Human Resources Programs Branch, at norma.valdes@wdc.usda.gov, by close of business Thursdays.

Also, effective immediately, all personnel actions, other than career-promotions, must be submitted in for approval before any action is taken. We are providing Attachment 2, "Personnel Actions," for your submission of any request for personnel actions. This is also due by close of business Thursdays to Ms. Valdes at the above e-mail address.

EXPIRATION DATE:
February 28, 2010

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Rural Development State Directors
Rural Development Acting State Directors

2

Please read both attachments carefully to assure that you are providing the required information and avoid any delay in us providing you a response. If you have any additional questions, please call Ms. Valdes at 202-692-0198, or you can contact her at the above e-mail address.

Attachments

Sent by electronic mail on February 11, 2009, at 2:00 p.m. by Human Resources.
State Directors should advise other personnel as appropriate.

[illegible]

Rural Development								
Organization (State, St. Louis, Wash., DC)	Location (State Office, Local Office, etc.)	Employee Name	Position Title	Grade and Series	Supervisors Name	Proposed Action (reassignment, promotion, new hire, etc.)	Approve	Dissapprove

February 13, 2009

SUBJECT: Interest Rate Changes for Housing Programs
and Credit Sales (Nonprogram)

TO: Rural Development State Directors,
Rural Development Managers,
and Area Directors

ATTN: Rural Housing Program Directors

The following interest rates, effective March 1, 2009, are changed as follows:

<u>Loan Type</u>	<u>Existing Rate</u>	<u>New Rate</u>
-------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------

ALL LOAN TYPES

Treasury Judgement Rate	0.370%	0.900%
-------------------------	--------	--------

The new rate shown above is as of the week ending January 30, 2009. The actual judgement rate that will be used will be the rate for the calendar week preceding the date the defendant becomes liable for interest. This rate may be found by going to the Federal Reserve website for the weekly average 1-year Constant Maturity Treasury Yield

(http://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/h15/data/Weekly_Friday_/H15_TCMNOM_Y1.txt).

RURAL HOUSING LOANS

Rural Housing (RH) 502 Very-Low or Low	4.375	4.000
---	-------	-------

EXPIRATION DATE:
March 31, 2009

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Single Family Housing (SFH) Nonprogram	4.875	4.500
Rural Housing Site (RH-524), Non-Self-Help	4.375	4.000
Rural Rental Housing and Rural Cooperative Housing	4.375	4.000

Please notify appropriate personnel of these rates.

(Signed by James C. Alsop)

JAMES C. ALSOP
Acting Administrator
Housing and Community Facilities Programs

Sent by electronic mail on 2/17/09 at 9:30am by PAD.
State Directors should advise other personnel as appropriate.

February 13, 2008

TO: State Directors
Rural Development

ATTN: Multi-Family Housing Program Directors

FROM: James C. Alsop *(Signed by James C. Alsop)*
Acting Administrator
Rural Housing and Community Facilities Programs

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2009 Site Manager of the Year Recognition Program

We are pleased to announce guidelines for our annual Multi-Family Housing Site Manager of the Year program for fiscal year (FY) 2009.

Awards may be presented in each of the following three categories: (1) Site Manager of the Year for Housing for the Elderly; (2) Site Manager of the Year for Housing for Families; and (3) Site Manager of the Year for Farm Labor Housing. We will choose a national winner in each of the categories this spring. The awards will be presented during the Council for Affordable and Rural Housing's 2009 Annual Meeting and Legislative Conference at The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City, Arlington, Virginia scheduled for June 7-9, 2009.

You should use the following selection criteria for making your choice in each category:

- Tenant satisfaction with the manager is high.
- Property has good curb appeal on a continuous basis.
- Manager has no incidents of noncompliance and no unresolved findings.
- Manager consistently does more than what is expected.

These criteria may be added to, but do not eliminate any. We ask that you use these primary criteria so that the program can be consistent Nationwide.

Please see the attached checklist (Attachment 2) to make sure that all items necessary for adequate judging of the entry are included. Please attach the completed checklist to your nomination package.

As in past years, if you want a certificate of recognition for your State winners signed by a National Office official, please submit Attachment 5. Do not include the certificate request in your nomination package, as it may be overlooked. This form should be sent by facsimile to (202) 720-0302.

EXPIRATION DATE:
February 28, 2010

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Housing Programs

In those cases where you are requesting a signed certificate only, and are not entering your site manager in the national competition, please reconsider. It is well worth the time and effort of preparing a nomination package if your site manager is selected as the best in the country and is eligible to attend the awards ceremony in the Nation's capital. If you are submitting the name of someone to be considered for National Site Manager, please submit a complete package. This should include all the information you used in determining the selection at the State level, and should contain all of the items provided in Attachment 2, along with the completed checklist.

Good photographs and letters of commendation from public officials and tenants are always beneficial. The selection panel at the National Office level has only the material you submit upon which to base their determination of the winners. Use any materials at your disposal to showcase your nominee at his or her best in each category. If your candidate has done an outstanding job in an area not listed in this unnumbered letter, please do not hesitate to add that information to your nomination package.

Please be sure to address the criterion regarding compliance with Rural Development regulations.

We request that you submit your package in a three-ring binder so that no information is misplaced or overlooked. Please clearly mark your State and the category (family, elderly, or labor housing) on the nomination package. Your packages should be sent by Federal Express or similar carrier in order to be received in good condition and in a timely fashion. Address packages to: USDA Rural Housing Service, Multi-Family Housing Portfolio Management Division, Room 1263, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250.

The deadline for receipt of nomination packages for National Site Manager of the Year is **May 15, 2009**.

It is our hope that you will continue to make this valuable program a success. If you have any questions, please call Multi-Family Housing Portfolio Management Division, at (202) 720-1603.

Attachments

1. Site Manager of the Year Recognition Program Guidelines
2. Best Section 515 or 514 Site Manager Nomination Form/Checklist with evaluation criteria
3. Sample Cover Letter Announcing Awards Program to People Who Might be Interested in Making Nominations
4. Example of Letter to Senator
5. 2009 Site Manager of the Year Award Winners National Office Certificate Request Form

SITE MANAGER OF THE YEAR RECOGNITION PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Following are guidelines and suggestions for implementing or continuing a Manager of the Year program in your State.

1. Determine who is eligible to receive the award. The idea behind this recognition program is to reward site managers who have close interaction with tenants and who deal with properties hands-on and on a daily basis. In some States, these managers live on the property they manage, while in others they live off-site and manage more than one property. Each State should decide whether it makes sense to limit the nominations to resident managers or to extend it to traveling site managers. Remember, however, that the recognition should be for an individual site manager and not owners or management companies.

2. Solicit nominations from tenants and Section 515 and 514 owners and management companies, as well as others you consider knowledgeable. The nomination process should be open so that you get the maximum number of nominations. Rural Development employees with a good knowledge of the nominee may make nominations, so long as the employee is not on the judging panel.

3. Publicize the program so as to maximize the number of nominations you get. Consider using local media resources and your local borrower associations and housing groups as well.

4. Make your selection based on the following criteria (you may add more, but at a minimum use the ones below):

- a. Tenant satisfaction with the manager is high.
- b. Property has good curb appeal on a continuous basis.
- c. Manager has no incidents of noncompliance and no unresolved findings.
- d. Manager consistently does more than what is expected.

Please use these primary criteria so that the manager recognition program can be consistent nationwide.

Attachment 2 provides the national criteria and the necessary documentation that needs to be provided. It is important that all items are addressed so that the package will be considered complete. Please attach this completed checklist to your nomination package.

5. Use a panel of representatives from different stakeholder groups to make your selections. Use panels consisting of Rural Development Multi-Family Housing (MFH) staff and management industry representatives, as well as others you think would be appropriate. Possible panelists include tenants, staff from Housing and Urban Development, a State Housing Finance Agency, a Public Housing Authority, or local civic leaders. The idea is to give an award that is recognized by a wide variety of industry and civic professionals.

6. If you have a large portfolio, you might consider using a two-phased process to make your selection. District or Area Offices could convene a panel to choose the best manager in their region and then forward the nomination package to the State Office, which could convene a panel to make the final selection.

7. Choose the best manager and submit your nomination to the National Office by **May 15, 2009**.

8. Notify the National Office of the name (or names) of the Site Managers of the Year in your State if you wish to have a certificate signed by the Administrator for your State winner(s). Send this information, as well as the name and address of the facility or facilities the manager oversees, to Multi-Family Housing Portfolio Management Division at fax number (202) 720-0302. If you are nominating your winner for the National Site Manager competition, please send (by Federal Express or similar carrier) the complete package upon which you based your determination. Please do not include your request for a certificate in your nomination package. Send it by facsimile only. Requests included in a package may be overlooked, as the nomination packages are not reviewed until immediately before judging takes place.

9. Consider presenting this award jointly with other management groups or at a State management conference. That way, you can highlight the achievements of the manager to a broad group of his or her peers. You may also consider presenting the award at a housing complex the manager oversees.

10. Take advantage of this opportunity for favorable press coverage. The manager recognition program is a chance to highlight one of the most positive aspects of our MFH program. Not only will press coverage help remind communities of how our programs help them, it will also focus their attention on one of their truly outstanding members whom they may not know. Encourage press coverage by inviting the press to your awards ceremony and by distributing press releases.

11. Let your Congressional delegation know about the winners in their districts. This gives members of Congress a chance to send a letter of recognition to the managers. It also highlights the success of our MFH program in serving communities. Attached is a sample letter you may use to send to your congressional delegation for the Site Manager of the Year program.

**BEST SECTION 515 OR 514 SITE MANAGER
NOMINATION FORM/CHECKLIST**

Please address the following criteria in the space provided. Remember, keep your answers short and to the point; however, the more letters, pictures, and documentation you can provide, the better. The nomination package should include the nomination letter summarizing nominee's qualifications and address all the following items and include attachments. This completed checklist should be attached to your nomination package. Failure to address each item will cause the package to be considered as incomplete.

___ **I. Tenant Satisfaction.** Overall, are tenants happy with the efforts this manager makes on their behalf and on the behalf of the housing complex? How do you know? Include photographs. Attach the following:

- ___ Letters commenting on the site manager's accomplishments from Congressmen or other officials or tenants.

___ **II. Curb Appeal.** Is the property attractively maintained and landscaped? If applicable, you may wish to discuss particular actions the manager has taken to increase the appeal of the property. Attach the following:

- ___ Pictures of grounds, buildings and signage indicating curb appeal.

___ **III. Compliance with Rural Development's regulations.** Attach the following documents:

- ___ Letter or written statement from servicing office verifying there are no incidents of noncompliance and no unresolved findings.
- ___ Copy of last supervisory visit.
- ___ Copy of last compliance review.
- ___ Copy of most recent physical inspection report.

___ **IV. Actions above and beyond what is expected.** Please describe any actions this manager takes on a consistent basis which make him or her truly exceptional and outstanding. Good pictures also help in this category. Document activities such as:

- ___ Pictures of tenants engaging in activities sponsored by site manager.
- ___ Copies of publications (such as newsletters) initiated and maintained for the residents by the site manager.
- ___ Newspaper articles depicting site manager's care of tenants and property.
- ___ Articles or letters showing site manager involvement in the community.
- ___ Manager helps residents obtain additional services.

**SAMPLE COVER LETTER ANNOUNCING AWARDS PROGRAM TO PEOPLE WHO
MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN MAKING NOMINATIONS**

NOMINATOR'S NAME
NOMINATOR'S ADDRESS

Dear [NOMINATOR]:

I know you will agree with me that USDA Rural Development's Section 515 and Section 514 rental housing site managers guarantee the success of these complexes. They make sure that day-to-day operations go smoothly, and often they invest a great deal of their own free time in providing tenants with a safe and cohesive community. Although these managers would do their jobs regardless of whether they received recognition, I believe we as management industry professionals should do whatever we can to let them know we appreciate their efforts. They deserve recognition for their outstanding work, and for this reason, we are sponsoring a program to recognize the best Rural Development site manager in [STATE NAME]. I hope that you might be able to join me in this important program by nominating someone you consider to be an outstanding site manager.

Please use the attached form to nominate the manager. You will note that the form asks you to comment on three factors:

- The level of tenant satisfaction with the manager.
- The curb appeal of the manager's property.
- Compliance with Rural Development's regulations
- The manager consistently doing more than what the job requires.

Make your presentation as complete as possible. Letters from tenants, members of the community, housing groups, and others highlighting the good qualities of your nominee are encouraged. Also include any local media coverage which has occurred. Please enclose as many pictures as you like of the manager's property that depict its curb appeal. Pictures of tenant activities sponsored, encouraged, or provided by the manager are beneficial. Submit the nomination package to [ADDRESS] no later than [YOUR DEADLINE].

After we receive the nominations, we will use the following process to choose the best site manager in [STATE NAME].

[DESCRIBE YOUR EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS HERE.]

We will present a plaque of recognition to the winner at a ceremony in [DATE, LOCATION, SPECIFY IF CEREMONY WILL BE HELD JOINTLY WITH SOMEONE ELSE OR AT AN ALREADY SCHEDULED CONFERENCE]. We also hope to engage the press in recognizing the exceptional efforts of the winning manager as well as all of our other great managers.

I hope that you will make the necessary effort to complete the enclosed nomination form. I can assure you that it will be worth your time.

Sincerely,
[STATE DIRECTOR]

**EXAMPLE OF LETTER TO SENATOR
[PLEASE CONSIDER A SIMILAR LETTER TO YOUR
CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION]**

Honorable *Name of Senator*
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0103

Dear Senator XXXX:

I am writing to inform you that xxxxxx has been chosen as the (State Office) 2009 Site Manager of the Year for the USDA Rural Development Multi-Family Housing program. XXXXXXXXXXXX operates the xxxxxx Apartments in xxxxxxxx.

Rural Development administers a national loan portfolio of over 16,000 rural rental housing complexes. In partnership with our private sector and nonprofit borrowers, we house very low- and low-income rural families, elderly people, and farmworkers. The site managers of the housing complexes we finance are employees of private companies, not the U.S. Government.

The site managers guarantee the success of our housing complexes. They make sure that day-to-day operations go smoothly, and they often invest a great deal of their own free time in providing tenants with a safe and cohesive community. Although these managers would do their jobs whether or not they received recognition, we believe that as lenders and program managers we should reward excellent performance.

In this spirit, we conducted a Manager of the Year competition in each State this year. State Rural Development staffs convened panels of public and private housing management experts to choose their best site managers. They used the following criteria: 1) tenant satisfaction; 2) property curbside appeal; 3) compliance with Rural Development's regulations; and 4) consistent performance of actions above and beyond the call of duty. States could add to these criteria, but they could not change or drop any of them.

The comments we received from tenants and our State Offices are testimony to the outstanding performance of the site managers. Following are a few typical examples:

Insert actual excerpts from your nomination packages. The following are examples.

- *He makes us very proud of where we live.*
- *They are always there to help with anything you need, no matter how big or small.*
- *He shows genuine concern and really puts his heart into the job.*
- *They look after my parents when I'm not there. I don't know what I would do without them.*
- *He listens to the tenants.*
- *She enforces the rules fairly and makes us all feel safe.*
- *My friends [from outside the complex] always comment on how beautiful and well maintained our grounds and buildings are.*
- *One of the greatest things about living here is the great security I feel. Once I became ill in the middle of the night. I pulled the chain on my alarm system and the managers were in my apartment immediately.*

- *Living here is like living at a big home full of loving friends and family. Once I was too sick to go to the barbecue [which the manager had organized], so the manager brought me a plate of food and sat down to tell me who was there and what the grandkids were doing. She really made me feel included in the fun.*

Ms. xxxxxxxx is a credit to herself, the apartments she manages, her employer, her community, USDA, and the Federal Government as a whole. If you would like to recognize Ms. Xxxxxxx, you may contact her at xxxxxxxxxxxx. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact (Name of State) State Director (Name of State Director) at (State Office phone number).

Sincerely,

State Director
Rural Development

**2009 SITE MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS
NATIONAL OFFICE CERTIFICATE REQUEST FORM**

Please use this form to let the National Office know who the winners were in your State, for whom you would like a certificate prepared signed by the Administrator. Please complete a separate Attachment for each award winner.

TO: MFHPMD
PHONE #: 202-720-1603
FAX #: 202-720-0302

STATE CONTACT: _____
STATE NAME: _____
PHONE #: _____
FAX #: _____

1. Name of Award Winner _____

2. Name(s) of Property/Properties He/She/They Manage(s) _____

3. Exact Name of the Category for Which He/She/They Were Chosen Winner (as it should appear on the certificate--for example, 2009 Pennsylvania Multi-Family Housing Site Manager of the Year for Elderly Housing) _____

4. Address to which the Certificate Should Be Sent (This should be someone at the State Office, so that the State Director can sign the certificate. Please include State Director's name.)

5. Date by Which You Need the Certificate _____

February 17, 2009

TO: State Directors, Rural Development

ATTENTION: Business Programs Directors

SUBJECT: Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program
Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program
Disaster Assistance Funding Procedures

This unnumbered letter replaces the December 22, 2008, unnumbered letter on the same subject. This unnumbered letter provides guidance regarding the availability of disaster assistance under the Business and Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan Program and Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) Program, and changes the eligible projects to disasters occurring in calendar year 2008, as opposed to fiscal year 2008.

Twenty-five million dollars of budget authority is available for disaster assistance, less 3 percent for administrative expenses. The B&I program will be apportioned \$19.4 million of that budget authority which equates to a supportable guaranteed loan level of \$445.977 million. In order to maintain this supportable loan level, no more than 12 percent of B&I disaster funds will be available with a 1 percent guarantee fee, and no more than 15 percent of B&I disaster funds will be available with a percentage of guarantee in excess of 80 percent. The RBEG program will be apportioned \$4.85 million. To be eligible for this assistance, the project must be located in a calendar year 2008 Presidentially declared disaster area. Projects located in the identified counties on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) map for these disasters will be eligible for funding. The FEMA Web site, www.fema.gov, lists Major and Emergency Disaster Declarations by year and by State. All of these disaster areas were declared by the President, but **only Major Disaster Declarations are eligible**. Designations include individual and public assistance. Both are eligible. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

For the B&I program, the State Director or designee may request funds for projects that are ready to be obligated from the Disaster Reserve by e-mailing a copy of Appendix C of RD Instruction 4279-B, and the Legislative and Public Affairs (LAPAS) Project Information sheet to Andrea Patterson, andrea.patterson@wdc.usda.gov, with a copy to Fred Kieferle, fred.kieferle@wdc.usda.gov. We will advise you by separate communication when funds become available.

EXPIRATION DATE:
February 28, 2010

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Community/Business Programs

Once funds become available, requests for RBEG disaster related funding will be accepted weekly by close of business on Fridays for projects that are ready to be obligated, until funding is exhausted. Awards will be made as soon as possible thereafter. For RBEG disaster funding requests, please submit, via e-mail, a project selection criteria scoresheet (which includes backup documentation to verify scoring), certification for request of funds, and a LAPAS Project Information Sheet that includes the FEMA Disaster Designation number and the date the qualifying disaster was declared to Cindy Mason (cindy.mason@wdc.usda.gov) with a copy to Melvin Padgett (melvin.padgett@wdc.usda.gov). All requirements of RD Instruction 1942-G must be met in processing the application.

For both B&I and RBEG funding requests, please ensure that the request is clearly marked **Disaster Funding. Please also indicate the disaster name and designation number.** When obligating B&I Disaster Fund guaranteed loans, please use Type of Assistance (TOA) code 187 for loans with a 2 percent guarantee fee and TOA code 315 for those with a 1 percent fee. For RBEG, please use TOA code 471. These projects should be obligated as normal via the Guaranteed Loan System.

Any unobligated funds will be carried over to the next fiscal year for projects in disaster designated areas. At this time, we do not have an estimate as to when these funds will be available, but we will notify you as soon as they are available.

If you have any questions about B&I funding, please contact Andrea Patterson, (202) 205-2460, or at the e-mail address above. If you have any questions about RBEG funding, please contact Cindy Mason, (202) 690-1433, or at the above e-mail address.

(Signed by Pat Fiala)

PAT FIALA
Acting Administrator
Business and Cooperative Programs

February 18, 2009

SUBJECT: Going Green by Reducing Unwanted Mail

TO: Rural Development National Office Employees
Washington, DC, Only

FROM: Clyde Thompson /s/ *Clyde Thompson*
Deputy Administrator
Operations and Management

This memorandum transmits the attached U.S. Department of Agriculture "Reduce Unwanted Mail Campaign" notification to National Office employees.

Employees can participate in the "Reduce Unwanted Mail Campaign," by placing all unwanted mail, catalogs, brochures, etc., in the specially marked containers at the following locations:

- South Building, Wing 3, 1st floor elevator lobby (Independence Avenue side);
- Basement of the Whitten Building, A-Section; or
- Reporters Building, 7th and 8th floor elevator lobbies.

Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any further questions, please contact Roderick Williams, Rural Development Mail Manager, at 202-692-0027 or via e-mail to rod.williams@wdc.usda.gov.

Attachment

EXPIRATION DATE:
February 28, 2010

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on 2/20/09 at 3:30 pm. by the Support Services Division.



Mailer's Memo

NOVEMBER 2008

Volume 6 No. 6

SPECIAL EDITION – GOING GREEN REDUCE UNWANTED MAIL

Much of the marketing mail that your office receives is discarded quickly, and USDA foots the bill for recycling or disposal. We receive a great deal of unsolicited mail, such as catalogs and advertising mail for products and services of all kinds. There is also a cost associated with mail center employees that sort and deliver this mail. Even when these materials are wanted, there can be a tremendous amount of waste and duplication. Some of this mail includes:

- Mail for staff members that are long gone
- Multiple mailings for the same person, often with small inconsistencies – misspellings, abbreviations – that make them seem like unique records
- Poorly targeted mailings, such as office supply catalogs or training programs.

Cut down on the amount of unwanted mail by keeping your name off mailing lists or requesting companies to delete your name from their mailing list.

USDA, Office of Operations, will be starting a pilot “Reduce Unwanted Mail Campaign” for all USDA unwanted mail this month. Place all your unwanted marketing mail, catalogs, brochures, etc., in the special Unwanted Mail Containers placed in Wing 3 First Floor elevator lobby (Independence Avenue side) and in the Basement of the Whitten Building A-Section. The Office of Operations staff will work to get in touch with the vendor to delete your name from their mailing list.

If you would like to delete your name from these unwanted mailing lists yourself, we are attaching some postcards that can be used to send to the companies.

USDA estimates that we receive about 50 tons of junk mail each year in the Mail Center. By reducing paper consumption by 50 tons per year, we will preserve about 750 trees annually. The USDA DC Mail Center receives 3,000-4,000 pieces of mail each day. Of that total, approximately 25 percent could be considered unwanted mail. Also, by reducing unwanted mail, we can improve the efficiency of the mail center.

For your household unwanted mail, you can significantly reduce the advertising mail you receive by registering with the Direct Marketing Association’s Mail Preference Service at www.dmachoice.org. You will be reaching some of the biggest direct marketers in the country with a single letter. Your registration will remain in effect for 5 years and the service only costs \$1 to register.

Office of Operations Mail and Reproduction Management Division

February 18, 2009

SUBJECT: Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act Teleconferences

TO: National Office Officials
Rural Development State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors
Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act Coordinators
Public Information Coordinators

FROM: Clyde Thompson /s/ *Clyde Thompson*
Deputy Administrator
Operations and Management

The Rural Development Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)/Privacy Act (PA) Unit will facilitate teleconferences to assist Rural Development FOIA/PA Coordinators and Public Information Coordinators with FOIA/PA policies and procedures.

The FOIA/PA Teleconferences will be in an open forum format during Calendar Year 2009. The purpose of the forum is to create an environment to exchange ideas useful in dealing with problems that commonly arise in administering the FOIA/PA. Please feel free to submit questions on the FOIA/PA regulations. Questions or topics for discussion should be e-mailed to FOIA@wdc.usda.gov.

The teleconferences will be from 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. (e.s.t) on the 4th Thursday of the month in April, July, and October 2009.

In order to participate, you may call (800) 867-6144, Participant Code 3198. If you experience telephone connection problems, contact the Technical Trouble line at (202) 720-8560 for assistance.

If you have any questions, please contact one of the FOIA/PA staff: Nona Jones, Rural Development FOIA/PA Officer at (202) 692-0004, or Karla Timmons, Rural Development FOIA/PA Assistant at (202) 692-0015. You may also e-mail the FOIA/PA Unit's mailbox at: FOIA@wdc.usda.gov.

EXPIRATION DATE:
December 31, 2009

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on 2/24/09 at 3:00 p.m. by the Support Services Division.
National Office Officials and State Directors should distribute to other personnel as appropriate.